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ABSTRACT

This project sought to find ways in which emotional learning could be brought to a level commensurate with intellectual learning. Confluent education refers to the concept of teaching a person through both cognitive and affective processes. Nine elements must be present in the teaching situation in order for confluent education to exist: responsibility--the ability to respond creatively and positively to any situation; convergency--relating and experiencing what is done or what is happening to the self; connectedness--a sense of positive affiliation with others; divergency--relating and experiencing what is happening in the world to the educational experience; power--a sense of personal control over what is happening or will happen; gestalt--gaining closure (satisfaction) through positive frustration and explication; identity--a feeling of self-worth, self-esteem, and ego identity; context-learning to understand communications through general semantics and environment; and evaluation--eliciting individuals' opinions concerning values. (LL)

DRICE

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On a cool, calm, clear evening in the summer of 1967, I was sitting in the dining room of Esalen Institute. I watched the waves along the shore beat against the cliffs and the slow undulations of the masses of kelp. The Big Sur country of California was being enveloped in the beauty of twilight while off in the distance, across the great expanse of sea, the sun was sinking, reddish golden, below the horizon. It was a peaceful time and I felt peaceful.

As I toyed with the food, enjoying the moment, I glanced at the man sitting opposite me at the table. George[1] was looking at me and seemed as if he had something to say. He thought for a bit, biting on his ever-present toothpick, then asked the question that was on his mind, "What are we going to call this thing we are working on?"

It was a good question. For the last year and a quarter we had been working on a project funded by the Ford Foundation and in consort with Esalen Institute. The genesis of the project was that education in the United States, particularly in its public schools, was too "one-sided." The whole idea of education has seemed to focus on the development of intelligence to the exclusion of man's emotional nature, and even to arbitrarily suppress any notion that man's emotional nature was or could be a part of learning. Therefore, our project had sought to find ways in which we could help alleviate this situation and with design aforethought bring emotional learning to a level commensurate with intellectual learning. We sought to teach cognitive (intellectual) and affective (emotional) factors <u>at the same time</u>, <u>in the same moment</u>, the standard curriculum of any school. We had just completed our project and now we were evaluating our results (which were rather pleasing to us), and wondering where we would go next.[2] Therefore, the question was a good one. For purposes of communication, a verbal shorthand was needed to put the theory, ideas, and knowledge gained into a single workable concept. That such verbal shorthand must be interpreted and explained time and again is of no consequence. It is even more important to develop a heuristic concept to communicate in some way to others what our work is about.

I laughed. The question felt good to me. Being always the shy one, I said, "Give me five minutes and I'll think of something." It was said flippantly and was meant to be. What can you call something that you have given a part of your life to, that you have agonized over, that has caused you pain, distress, euphoria, laughter, tears, enlightenment, mental growth, and the opportunity to work with adults and young people in a process of discovery and joy and involved meaning?

As the depth of the question sank into me, the door of the dining room opened and Fritz shambled in.[3] Fritz was the "guru" of Esalen Institute at that time, the man who was the "father" of Gestalt Therapy, and a man whom we not only talked about as a person and whose theories were the source of our discussions and the base of our new ideas in education, but a man who had taken his precious time to teach and to work with us as persons, as teachers and as individuals who were working to make change within the schools, to humanize the learning process. Whatever he was, Fritz was one of this century's great humanists. The change he has wrought and is bringing about (even though he died some years ago) is profound.[4]

The Concept of Confluency

Fritz had been teaching us the concept of confluence as well as working us through some of the applications to ourselves (which in itself is a good illustration of Confluent Education). It was Fritz's idea that another's personality often becomes so much a part of our own, we take in and absorb that person's personality until it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between the two.[5] The result is that the organism is out of balance. One feels unhealthy, ill at ease, and seeks constantly some form of escape from one's self. The purpose, then, of the therapy, is to assist the patient by frustrating him, primarily, to divide the taken-on person from the self, and to discard or reown that extra personality. Fritz considered that when one is living with someone else's personality, he is in a state of confluence. Confluence, in its meaning, is a state in which things merge together in such a way that you cannot distinguish one thing from the other (see Diagram 1).

As I watched Fritz walk across the room, nodding to people, smiling in his beard, it came to me that what he had been telling us about the state of confluence could be applied to what we were doing in our educational research and what we hoped to do in our teaching roles (see Diagram 2). We could become confluence teachers, teaching confluent methods for confluent ends, resulting in individuals who were confluent persons. In our viewpoint, the state of confluency would become a "Yes-Yes" to Fritz's "No-No."

I related the idea to George. Since we were engaged in marrying the cognitive processes to the affective processes in such a way as to teach them both at the same time, then we were really in a state of confluence and it could result in a confluently educated person. Such a person would be one who had been taught through cognitive and affective processes, both at the same moment, from a teacher who was confluently trained and confluent in self, and the result would be a person who was a totally functioning person, The Integrated Man. Therefore, I suggested that the title of the educational process could appropriately be called Confluent Education.

No bells went off nor any sudden shaking of the earth. However, it had some sort of appeal. It seemed at first a clumsy word and concept. We mulled it over and talked about it a little. A few weeks later the title began to take hold of us and to merge with our concepts of education. (Since that time we have fought over the word, challenged it, been challenged by it, answered criticisms about the use of titles and what this one possibility means, have criticized the title ourselves, but it has held and become ever stronger in its meaning and purpose).

1. Psychological Confluent State and Therapeutic Division.

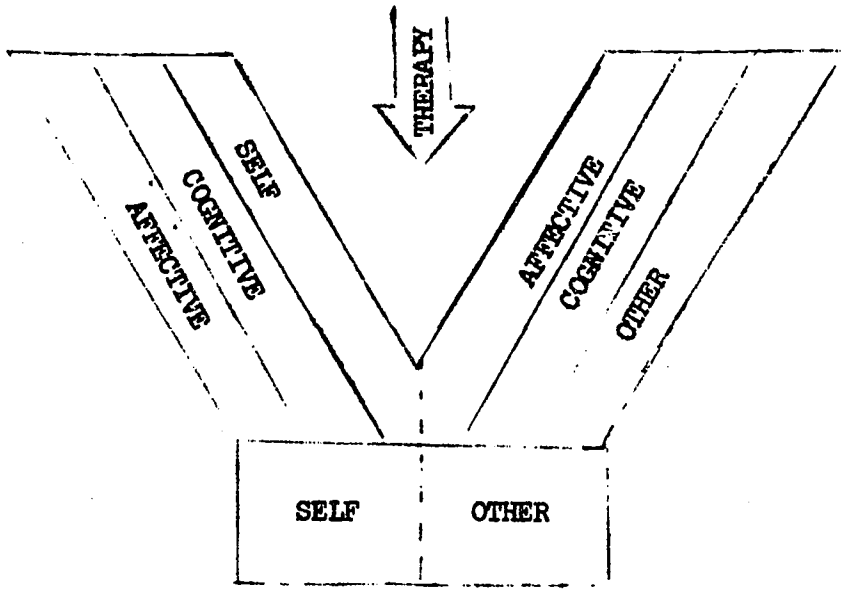

DIAGRAM 1

In the psychological sense a confluency exists when another personality is so merged with yours that it is difficult, if not impossible to distinguish between where you end and another begins. In the educational sense this duality exists when the learner's needs as a person and for knowledge are overshadowed and submerged by the needs of others (i.e., family and society) and he becomes less of what he is and can do, and more of what someone else imagines that he is and can do. The purpose of therapy is to drive a wedge between the two so that you, by dropping the other personality, become more of what you are. You become an actualizer, in Shostrom's term, rather than trying to manipulate yourself, others and your environment. In Perls' terms, you learn to depend more on yourself rather than on your environment. In confluent education concepts you become more responsible for your own learning rather than taking the attitude, as so many of our learners do, of "Come on, teach me."

2. Confluent Education Process and the Merging of the Cognitive and Affective Elements.

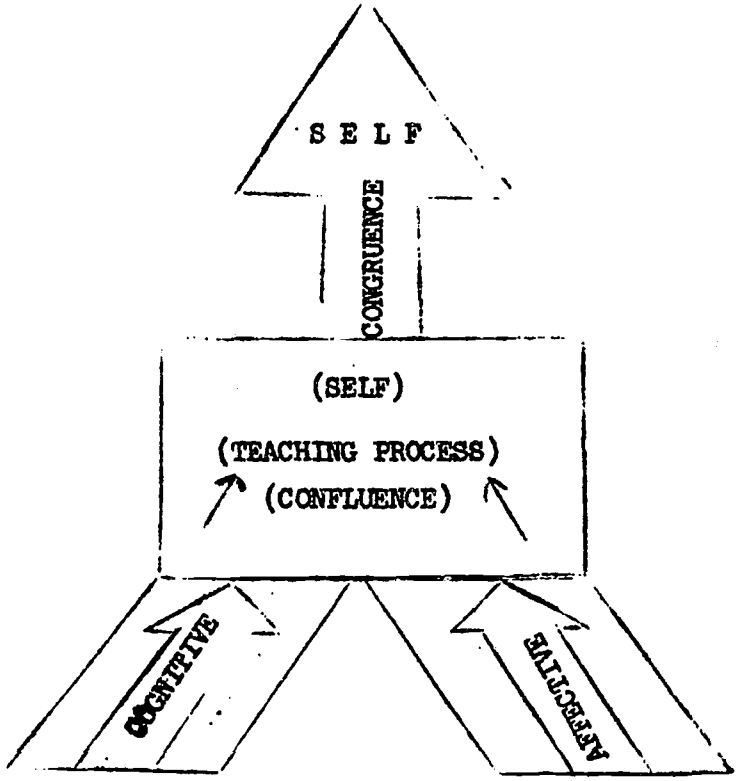

DIAGRAM 2

This diagram is both correct and incorrect in the sense that no situation exists which does not have a cognitive and affective element in it. The diagram is serving to illustrate how in confluent education we take the cognitive element and its affective element and give them equal emphasis in the learning process. Where the cognitive element is known we bring in the affective element. Where the affective element is known we bring the cognitive element to the foreground. This "confluence" is the process of education that is occurring at the moment and the result should be a person who is more congruent--a person who understands more of what they are and acts functionally within the context of their life.

Perhaps the shorthand of what to call a merging of the cognitive and affective domains in education could have been referred to as integrating or integrated education, or another word concept signifying the merging of two things. But even integrating does not convey the essence of what is implied in the definition of confluent. This confluence is not a wild thrashing together of two diverse elements with eventual reconciliation and tolerance of one another so that they can work together. It is a smooth and flowing river of two elements which recognize that in each are elements of the other. With this recognition the two are intertwined so that one does not take precedence over the other and each serves to enhance the value of the other.

It is important for me to repeat that in every cognitive domain element there are affective elements, as well as there are cognitive elements in every affective domain element (neither cognitive nor affective has been totally lacking in any educational practice). It is in confluent education, however, that we actively seek a confluence of thought and feeling that is harmonious and functional.

The Concept of Congruency

There is a further state of being that is the result of the confluent education methods and system of learning.

The heuristic term for this state of being is referred to as congruent. Say that word aloud for a few moments and taste it on your tongue. How does it taste? What does it taste like? I enjoy using the word and when I say it I feel the warmth of the word throughout my system and it is a strangely satisfying elixir.

What does it mean to be congruent? Have you ever felt sometimes that you in your universe, that which makes up your personal world, are in complete harmony? That all systems are "go," so to speak? If so, then you were in a state of being that is congruent.

Congruent basically means that all of the systems in your universe are working in harmony. What you do is consistent with what you say. What you say is consistent with what you feel. What you feel is consistent with how you look. How you look is consistent with how you hold and control your body. How you hold and control your body is consistent with the moment in which you exist within the universe. You are in harmony and harmony exists because all things are in a state of consistency. You are a congruent person.

One cannot always be congruent and probably should not expect to be. However, it is an ideal goal and one well worth its role as a guide. I have often used the following example to illustrate to people what I mean by the use of the term in education. As I mentioned earlier, if a teacher is angry with a student and the whole body is tense and vibrant and there are undertones of anger in the voice, and the teacher acts and talks (and sometimes says) that he is not angry, then he is in fact saying two opposite things and is in a state of disharmony. If the teacher is in fact angry with a student, the voice shows it, the body shows it, the words say it, and then the teacher is in fact congruent.

This does not mean that the teacher is either right or wrong. That is another matter entirely. What it does mean is that the teacher is acting consistently and in consort with the cognitive and affective nature of his person.

To use another illustration, imagine that you are working with a student (in context it could be any person any time) and that student is quiet, shy and withdrawn, commonly referred to as a "loner." As you begin to know this person and to work with him you discover he is not a natural loner but rather a person who is extraordinarily sensitive to what others say or do within his presence (he is painfully aware of himself and his place within society). In this illustration such a person is not congruent. It would seem that the outward appearances coincide with where the person is "at." But that would be missing the point that he is wanting and needing more companionship, relaxed companionship, with others, and the painful self-awareness is a drain on his energy sources. This is another case of disharmony. It is then that the confluent education process comes into being to assist the individual in desensitizing. (Painful self-awareness is one of the most persistent and pernicious blocks to learning that I know to exist, and possibly the greatest deterrent to learning that exists.)

Two sentences perhaps best define the state of being called congruent. One is that there is the presence of differentiation in the human being. (Differentiation is to discriminate and to perceive the differences in or between things. It means as well that to differentiate is to become unlike or dissimilar so that there is an apparent change in character. Marking off by differences, distinguishing, altering, changing is an indication that an individual is "growing." If you are always the same, it is an indication that you may lack the quality to "grow" and are reacting to people and things rather than being self-actualizing.) Differentiation means that all systems merge with one another and work in harmony. When differentiation does not exist, a person does not learn because they fear to learn. If all systems "are go" and there is differentiation as process in the person, fear is replaced with ease and learning is enhanced. The second sentence defining congruent (or congruency) is that the applicability of <u>what</u> is being done must also be a part of differentiation. We are what we seem but what we seem needs to be in harmony.

With these two concepts in mind I am going to discuss the nine basic factors of confluent education. Each one of them interrelates with the others yet each one has a distinctive definition (cognitive and affective) in and of itself. It will be my purpose to discuss each one of these facets, their definition, how they apply, and where applicable, give some illustration of how they are used. Also, I will cite corroboration or research evidence that seems to indicate the feasibility and applicability of the concept.

The Concepts and Elements of Confluent Education

Diagram 3 is a graphic illustration of the flow of confluent education from the basic needs of man, as observed and recorded by Abraham Maslow, to the Integrated Man. Each step in the process has its own concept, form and function and interrelates to all other parts of the process.

Once man's basic needs have been met, then other elements can come into

being. These new elements complement the basic needs and allow for the flowing forward of the educational process. These elements, as I see them, are nine in number and form the parameters of confluent education. They are the necessary building blocks for this process of education. In summary, these elements are:

Responsibility: the ability to respond and the "owning" of one's own actions or inactions.

Convergency: whatever is happening must be related to the individual's own experiences.

Divergency: relating what is going on in the world to what is going on at the moment of teaching.

Evaluation: the seeking of opinions and the stating of values in order to formulate and express our own.

Connectedness: developing a sense of positive affiliation one with another.

Identity: developing a sense of self-worth, self-esteem, and ego strength in each individual.

Power: a sense of control over what is happening or will happen to you, knowledge that you can act.

Context: evaluating anything in terms of <u>what</u> is going on at the moment and <u>how</u> it is going on.

Gestalt: making what is implicit in a situation, explicit, and finishing a situation so that it becomes whole.

These are probably not the final facets of the definition of confluent education but they serve as the groundwork for further explorations into meaning and application.

It is intended that each of these facets be included implicitly or explicitly, in any lesson and/or interaction with any human being. They can become absorbed so much into your system that you automatically apply them in whatever context you happen to be working in. As far as a teacher's lesson planning goes, it means that these factors are <u>in addition</u> to the goals and objectives already established.[6] Confluent Education is not an easier way of teaching or a "groovy" method of teaching. It is a serious and knowledgeable way of teaching for serious and knowledgeable ends.

<u>Responsibility</u> (Diagram 3)

Most of us are taught a concept of "responsibility" from the beginning of our lives. We soon learn that in order to be loved we must exhibit "responsibility" or, to be precise, do what the other person wants done.

"Responsibility" can be equated with the super-ego concept of Freud. The super-ego, in these terms, is the conscience of mankind. In turn, the conscience is simply that which you have been taught since you were born. It is a product of where you were born, who you were born to, and how you were

3. The Process of Confluent Education

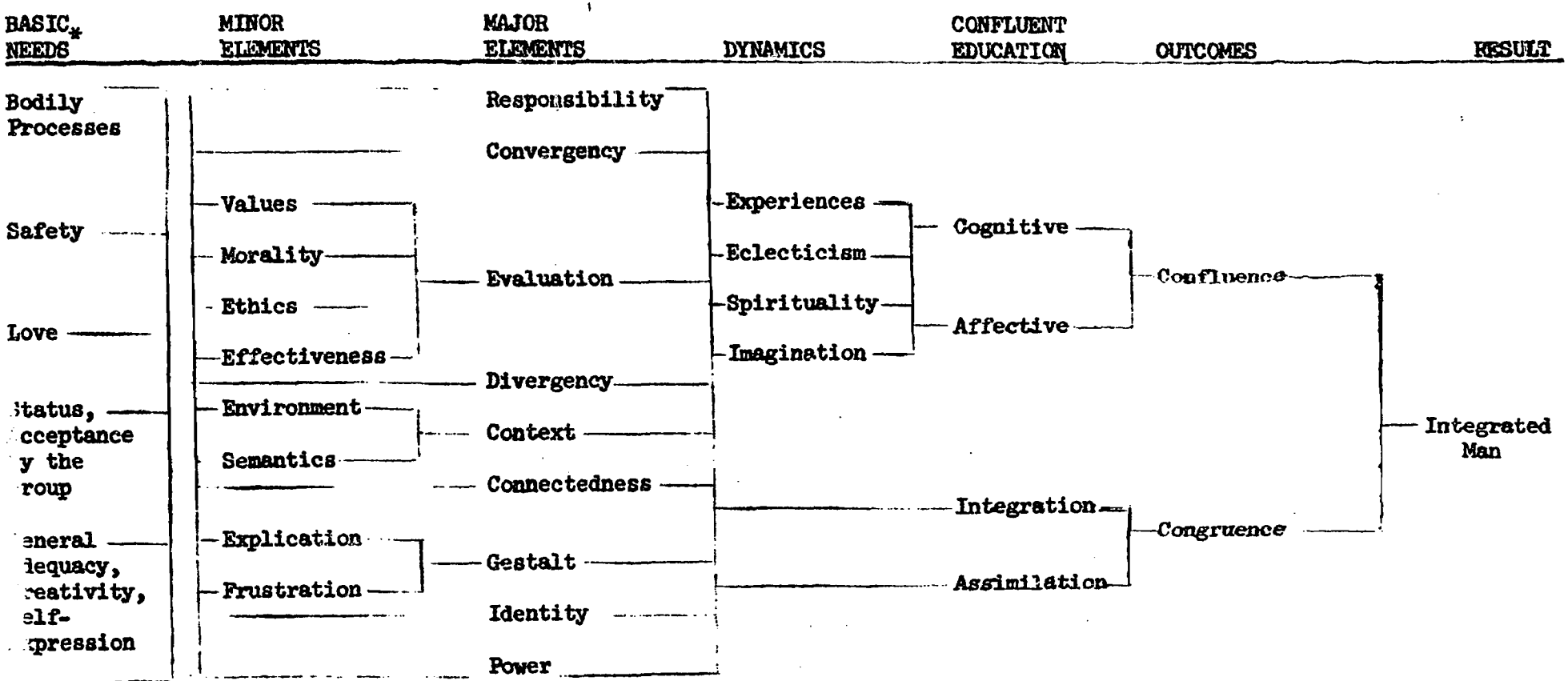

DIAGRAM 3

ased on Maslow's list of basic needs:
A. H. Maslow, "Preface to Motivation Theory." Psychosomatic Medicine, 5, 85-92, 1943.
A. H. Maslow, 'A Theory of Human Motivation." Psychological Review, 50, 370-396, 1943.

"raised." When you react to a stimulus you base your actions upon your perception of it.

Experiments in perception (Ittelson, Kilpatrick, 1951) suggest that perception is never a "sure thing." The eyes see things as they are but the mind interprets what is seen. It is as if the eye says "This is what I see" and the mind responds by saying "No, that is not what you saw. What you saw is this." What we understand is our own personal construction of what is seen, felt, heard, tasted and/or smelled. These researchers state that these are "bets." We make decisions based on the best possible "bet" for working out some action.

> "We make these bets on the basis of our past experience. When we have a great deal of relevant and consistent experience to relate to stimulus patterns, the probability of success of our prediction (perception) as a guide to action is extremely high, and we tend to have a feeling of surety."[7]

To carry this further, one has to only imagine being born to another family. If, for example, you were born into and raised in a family indigenous to Africa or Asia, how might you be? Would you be reacting now to what is happening to you in the same way as you would if the obverse were true? Would your perceptions of yourself and of your world be the same or would you be likely to respond entirely differently?

I can see in this the idea that "responsibility," as the outer world interprets it, is a method of controlling the organism, of binding it, of making sure that it does not invade an authoritative person's personal world or feelings. Acceptance of this control on the organism's part thus does <u>something for me</u> while it accomplishes its goal of control. There is always with us the idea of something for something. (Later on in this work I will speak of the idea of "polarities" which also fits this concept.)

My own personal experience as well as my studies and teaching have indicated to me the deleterious effects of this concept of "responsibility" upon teaching and learning (as well as upon marriage and vocation spheres).

I have often talked to teachers about using other methods of learning with special emphasis upon finding where the student "is at" and taking him to where he wants to go. More often than not the reaction is that there is a stated body of cognitive material that <u>must</u> be taught. The teacher has a "responsibility" to society to teach that body of material within the specific time allotted. Thus, there is no allowance for individualizing the work. It also seems apparent that the teacher is placing his concept of responsibility as well as the subject matter above trying to teach whatever it is a person <u>can</u> or <u>wants</u> to learn.

Students have been taught their basic ideas of responsibility by the time they get to school. They are taught that they are "responsible" to their parents because they are their parents, and in turn their parents are responsible to them because they are their children. It is a quid pro quo that leads to some heartbreaking personal reactions in that each one is sure the other has a debt to pay to the other.

"Responsibility" in these terms can be translated to mean "owe." "I am responsible" becomes "You owe me or it" and/or "I owe you or it." It becomes evident that the purpose of the concept, as it is generally used, is to make sure that others do what you want them to do and that we do what we imagine others want of us.[8] We then become objects rather than selves. Becoming an object is to be directed by outside agencies. One reacts rather than initiates. In effect, it is like David Riesman's "other-directed" person who becomes a human "radar" set. That is, the person sends out signals, imagines what the other wants, and then acts accordingly.[9] It also stifles our self-esteem and makes of us a "thing." It also makes us dependent upon others for support. We wait to be told what to do rather than taking initiative for ourselves.

Consider the following dialogue which took place in a senior high school between a student and myself. It was a social studies class and I was wandering around the classroom while the students were engaged in either a project of their own or one of the writing or work assignments on the board. A slight and shy girl, Diane, asked me to come over to her.

Me: "You called, Diane?"

Diane: "I don't know what to do."

Me: "What about the assignments on the board?"

Diane: "Tell me which one to do."

Me: "You decide which one to do."

Diane: "But there are so many of them."

Me: "Each one of them is a writing assignment. You decide which one to do and I'll help you with it."

Diane: "Tell me which one to do and I'll do it."

And so it went. Diane didn't give up that day. In fact, she didn't give up the whole year. What she did do was to begin writing letters to me telling me what a poor teacher I was. Very vehement letters. I answered them as best I could, always aware not to make a decision for her. At the end of the year she apparently had done little work in social studies, but she had done more writing than she had been doing up to that time. This class was one of the so-called "slow learner" groups. This young lady worked her way through school, eventually graduating, and also learned to take responsibility for herself. She learned to work more on her own. We had moved, in effect, from the "You owe me" answers concept to the "Please, teacher, I'll do it myself" response. This concept of responsibility builds self-esteem, creativity and a sense of power in one's self. You may see how this fits with the other concepts as this chapter progresses.

Responsibility can be read to mean "response-able." Or, in confluent education terms, "ability to respond." Note how these simple definitions delve immediately to the heart of the matter. There is no equivocation of concept nor blurring of meaning. If one is responsible then one has the ability

to respond, one is response-able. There are no intended value judgments in the definitions. Responsibility means simply that one can respond in accordance with the stimulus present and that such a response is both confluent and congruent.

If I were to challenge a professional heavyweight boxer to a fight, or to pick one with him, I would not be responsible. My evaluation of the context would be impaired because I could not win such a contest, and the fact that I would challenge him to a fight would indicate that I was not response-able--I was not congruent. To evaluate a situation and to work through the experience in a constructive manner is at the essence of the definition of responsibility in confluent education terms.

It can also be seen that this definition and concept of responsibility puts the onus on the individual. You cannot escape from the responsibility, the response-able, the ability to respond. It is you who makes every decision every second of your life and you must live and work through those responsibilities. The aim, however, is not a putting of judgments and recriminations on the self and/or onto others. It is being aware that you are what you are because you made the decisions to be that way.

Confluent education seeks to establish that once the definition is accepted the individual becomes stronger mentally and physically. You become responsible for your learning, living and loving. The aim becomes, as Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman say:

> "to realize again that you are creative in your environment and are responsible for your reality--not to blame, but responsible in the sense that it is you who lets it stand or changes it."[10]

DRICE, Development and Research in Confluent Education, of the Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara, funded by the Ford Foundation and directed by Dr. George Isaac Brown, has had a Responsibility and Achievement Project for a senior high school in operation. The basic premise of this project was that responsibility, as defined in confluent terms, could be taught in confluence with the regular curriculum of a school. In essence, it boils down to the fact that we have for years <u>told</u> persons that they must be responsible.
It is my assumption that in order to be responsible one must be given the chance to practice responsibility. Therefore, learning to be responsible requires putting individuals into situations in which they learn to be responsible and to make functional decisions.[11]

<u>Convergency</u> (see Diagram 3)

Convergency is a similar term to confluence. Confluence is a flowing together so that one thing cannot be distinguished from another. Convergency means to come together, to happen at the same moment. Convergency in confluent education means that in any situation, lesson or event, whatever is happening must be related to the individual's own experiences. In other words, whatever is happening in the classroom, whatever is being taught, is not a thing "put there" to be examined objectively (if such a thing is possible) but must be related to the individual's own experiences. "How does that relate

to me?" is a key question for every person to ask himself.

Putting the question into cognitive terms, ask these questions of yourself,

How is my death like Lincoln's?

What can I do for Newton's theory?

How do I affect 5 x 13?

Where does my scheme of things fit the predicate nominative?

These questions are a personalization of knowledge so that it is not just things or "bits" but is relevant to whatever is going on with yourself. It is, in effect, assimilated and becomes part of you as it relates to you. That is, in Bruner's terms, "getting to the child's feeling, fantasies, and values with one's lessons."[12] The additional input, however, which is adding on to Bruner's theory rather than accepting it verbatim, is that what is taken in must be relevant to those feelings, fantasies and values the child already possesses. The question may well be, "How does this pertain to where I am right now?" In this sense it does not mean that if the child is restricted by emotional learning problems the personalization of knowledge will inhibit learning, but rather, that personalization of that knowledge will help the child to recognize where he is "at" and to decide to change or not change his mode of life.

The definition I am using in regard to convergency is somewhat at odds with that of J. P. Guilford who sees "convergent" in terms of intellectual production. In his view, it means the utilization of information in such a way that it "...leads to one right answer or to a recognized best or conventional answer."[13] However, if this is looked at in terms of the "one right answer" or a "best or conventional answer" and is applied to one's self rather than others, then it, too, would apply to the meaning of convergency in the definition of confluent education. The questions to be asked of yourself are: (1) What is the one right answer for me? (2) What is the best or conventional answer for me? If the questions are applied to others then it is not convergent and is, in fact, attempting to think and act for others. That is, to do for others what they can do for themselves.

Piaget has formulated stages of intellectual development. One of these steps is called "adaptation" which is comprised of two complementary processes called assimilation[14] and accommodation. Piaget sees accommodation as assimilating experiences into the expanding structure of the intellect.[15] The accommodation results in a modified way of reacting by the person. (The "modified way of reacting" has been one of the basic definitions of education and is usually stated as "a change in behavior.") Convergency as I use and conceptualize it means the factor of insuring that what is taught is in some way related to what is going on within the person.

Referring back to that element of Responsibility, that element seeks to work on the "ability to respond." Convergency seeks to personalize the knowledge so that what the student responds to comes from within. He is responding to what is being taught and is relating what is being taught to his self.

Divergency (see Diagram 3)

My school experiences and observances have indicated to me how often what is being taught is treated as a separate reality. It is extracted from some larger mode and distilled and presented as a thing. This thing has no life of its own and is simply something to be looked at, dissected, committed to memory, and regurgitated on demand. It is an introjection. This separateness can inhibit learning by saying (in effect) what is being learned is not really related to the individual and does not relate to the world at large.

The element of convergency in confluent education seeks to establish that what is being taught and learned is not in fact separate, it is an integral part of the student's universe. Divergency is relating what is going on in the world to what is going on at the moment of teaching.

If I am teaching concepts in psychology only as concepts then I am missing a great opportunity to relate them to the problems of the world. When one speaks of the actions of people in terms of rationalizations, displacement, approach-approach conflict, these are simply words and definitions. In teaching, through convergent experiences, they can be related to what is going on with the student at that precise moment. At that same time, it seems appropriate to relate to them what is going on "out there." How do politicians use rationalizations? How are displacements affecting the environment? What nations appear to be in approach-approach conflicts and/or approach-avoidance conflicts? Whatever is happening "out there" is relevant to what is being taught and to the inner person of the student.

I was privileged to observe a teacher-training class in session at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in which Dr. Dale L. Brubaker gave an explicit illustration of this principle. In a student-teacher seminar the students were going through "practical" work to prepare them for their role in the classroom. At the same time they were studying their own personal reactions to events that not only could conceivably happen to them, but could give them some insight as to their own feelings. The following is my observation of this experience:

FORMAT

Subject: Role Playing: Normative-Analytical Differences

Aims

Studying the distinction between personal belief systems and analytical frameworks; working out problems through use of the group process; relating course work to the reality of the working situation; illustrating cognitive problems and affective influences; improving reading, writing, speaking, and thinking.

Format

1. Introduction (at ease development).

2. A student is asked to leave the room and then return in the role of a twelfth-grade teacher of a problems in democracy class. Upon entering

the room the teacher is asked to read the following from a card: "Today we want to discuss the situation in our state in particular and the situation in city slums and ghettos in general as regards welfare. Do any of you know why so many seemingly able-bodied people live on welfare?"

3. The "teacher" is to conduct the class as they might do it when they become teachers.

4. The "students" have been primed to react to the "teacher" in any way they see fit. They are to be twelfth-grade students. One student has been given a role to be played with the teacher. This role consists of the following statement: "The problem with 'those people' is that they want to get good jobs but are lazy and dirty. They just want a handout."

5. The dialogue is continued between "teacher" and "student." The class, who have not been aware of the assignment, also enter the dialogue. The interaction is carried out to a general conclusion.

6. At the conclusion of the dialogue the group as a whole discusses what happened. The emphasis is to be on the reactions of the "teacher" with attention to any common reaction patterns generally heard. Attention of the group is also brought to the aims cited above for discussion.

7. General discussion concerning the class and the problem it brings up. General evaluation.[16]

I find this kind of teaching deep and meaningful. In this teaching we are preparing student teachers not only for the problems of the classroom, but are acquainting them with the problems of our society, how they pertain to us as individuals, and how our own actions affect our concepts and reactions with others. This kind of divergent teaching is also building strengths for the teaching problems that lie ahead.

On another occasion I was with Gerald Weinstein[17] of the School of Education, University of Massachusetts, as he worked with a group on educational problems. One young lady was present who had just graduated from teacher training and had been hired to work in the slum area of one of our large cities. She was young, white, blonde, slight, blue-eyed, soft-voiced, and perpetually bouncing. She talked glowingly of all she was going to do in this new school of hers. She seemed to have no idea of what teaching lively youngsters was going to be like.

Jerry set the room up as if it were a classroom. He asked members of the group to volunteer to play the roles of eighth grade students. Then he asked the young lady to go out of the room and to return in the role of teacher. She was to come in as if this were her class on the first day. The class took their seats and began playing their roles. There was a crap game going on as well as pushing and loud conversations. The door opened and the young teacher came in, bouncing, with hands clasped in front of her. "Good morning, class!" she said brightly. They looked at her and went back to whatever they were doing. She got nowhere with them.

After a time they stopped action and discussed not only how the teacher felt and how the students felt, but what could be done to work out the situation. When the action had been processed[18] the young teacher went out again and the play began again. This time she was required not to "bounce" in, not to clasp her hands, and to speak in a firm voice.

And so it went for over two hours. The young teacher was in tears part of the time. The class was laughing, shouting, pushing, writing "dirty words" on the blackboard, defending the teacher before other students, and generally enjoying the whole scene while being uneasy about it.

In the end the young teacher became more firm, honest and open with the class and they responded in like manner to her. They had worked through a potentially damaging class situation to a class situation in which learning could take place in an effective atmosphere.

Gerald Weinstein refers to this as strength training. It is that. It is also loving training. You care enough about people to help them be prepared for what may come. It is also <u>divergent</u> teaching in that what is being taught and how it is being taught are related to what is going on in the world.

Divergence has sometimes been associated with differentiation.[19] In the sense in which divergence is an element of confluent education it is not so much differentiation as another mode of bringing together the diverse elements of our lives. It is another confluence technique in forming a gestalt. According to Gattegno:

> "...<u>true breakthroughs in any direction have been the result of syntheses rather than analyses</u>. By flooding a complex situation with light from every direction we illuminate areas which a single beam of light could never reach. Too little effort, however, is put into learning how to think in a complex way about complex things; too much effort is still devoted to splitting problems into minute factors that have little relation to the original, total challenge."[20] (emphasis his)

Divergency is one way of gaining light. It is "flooding a complex situation with light" from every direction. All the elements of confluent education, discovered and undiscovered, help in illuminating, understanding, teaching and learning.

<u>Evaluation</u> (see Diagram 3)

One way to describe and define the term evaluation is to imagine a continuum. On any particular issue one can take the extreme polar positions and then, on the continuum, see what lies between them. When we do this with a group of students we are seeking their opinions. The question is, "Where do you stand on this continuum?" I imagine that most everyone would seek a position somewhere between the two extremes and a lively debate would follow. It is the <u>seeking</u> of these opinions, the stating of these values, that is one of the definitions of <u>evaluative</u> in confluent education.

Evaluation is to appraise carefully, in its dictionary definition. The addition in confluent education is to seek from the student opinions as to

values, morality, ethics and effectiveness. It is not merely for the sake of exercise that we do this, but rather with a genuine concern to know how the student feels about these things and also to help students formulate and express them. I cannot know what a student knows unless he can in some way get it out so that I can observe it. A student may be involved and very knowledgeable but unless he has some way of getting it "out in the open" there is no way that I can work with him or respond to him! If I don't seek this information then I become a "telling" teacher, and that is the opposite of this concept of evaluation in which you make it a continuing effort to know the student's opinions. You value their opinions and you seek to know them.

Values (see Diagram 3)

According to Herb Otto:

> "A heightened awareness of our values is the first step toward expressing them through behavior and actions. What we say is of importance and worth, and what we really know is of importance and worth."[21]

It is my contention that confluent education in its element of the evaluation concept, seeks exactly that. We become aware of our values by examining our own and matching them with others. By examining them and by measuring them with others, we may gain sufficient strength to either change what we don't like or become more satisfied with those we have. Perhaps the greatest attribute is actually becoming aware of the ones we have. In general, it seems we humans are not aware how much of our activity is predicated upon values we don't know we have. If our values are not clear to us it is easy to become apathetic, to do whatever the crowd does, or to rebel in irrational ways.

In a study on the highly creative and the highly intelligent (Getzels, Jackson, 1962) the two groups agreed almost exactly on what constitutes adult success but expressed considerable disagreement on what qualities they would prefer for themselves. They were evidently expressing what could be called "norm" in values but did not want these "norms" for themselves. They were in effect trying to establish their own values. In further work, Getzels and Jackson note that the high IQ student wants for himself what the teacher wants and/or what makes for success in our society. On the other hand, the highly creative student is saying, "I understand what the high IQ wants, what the teacher wants, what makes for adult success, but these are not necessarily the qualities I want for myself."[22] In each of these groups there are already established values, some of which they are aware of and some of which they are not. In order for them to understand what it is they want and what their values are, it is necessary for education to seek the opinion of students. The evaluation concept of confluent education is in effect a way of arriving at ideas, becoming aware of them, and acting upon them. As you will note, it is not telling students what their values should be but rather helping them to find out what they are.

Morality (see Diagram 3)

The moral quality of character of our young people seems always to be a matter

of concern to other generations. We worry about whether our young are adopting our personal morality and the morality of the society. Within families it is generally a matter of concern as to whether or not the young people are adopting the morality of the family. It is in the questioning of this morality that one of the greatest gaps between the generations seems to come forth. The very act of questioning, in itself, is often freightening to parents and other adults. When you add to that questioning the challenge of the young against what has been, the threat becomes manifold.

In confluent education the concept of evaluation encompasses the idea of seeking opinions on personal morality. I am not trying to get the young people to conform to what I or others refer to as "right conduct," but rather for the individual to examine personal morality. What makes me feel this way? What is the best path for me? Do my actions result in good for me? Is what I do functional or dysfunctional? How do persons' ideas of morality affect their way of life and of living around the world? How do I interact with other people in terms of my own morality as well as in terms of theirs? Is there some aspect of morality that I want to change? What is morality? What will happen if I formulate my own set of morals? Can I live in this society?

There is moral education in the schools now. By what we teach and how we teach it, by what we do and how we do it, we are teaching morality. The rules by which we operate, especially all the "don't" rules, are fundamental teachers of what this society and nation decide are morality. The element of confluent education called evaluation in which morality takes part is that there is a need to make these factors known to the child so that he can examine his own growth, and act accordingly.

Following the work of Piaget, Larry Kohlberg has developed a framework for observing the moral development of children and has devised teaching strategies that can lead to moral maturity. He states his thesis in stages of moral growth and twenty-one elements of growth through the states. Basically, he sees Level One as the "Premoral" state, Level Two as the "Conventional Role Conformity," and Level Three as the "Self-Accepted Moral Principles."[23] The element of confluent education called evaluation, in its subset of morality, is the one that seeks to bring the student to examine morality in order that they may truly find "Self-Accepted Moral Principles." This looking at yourself is fundamental. I must first find out what it is I have in order to examine it. To examine it is then to decide whether or not I wish to change. I can also develop satisfaction (examined satisfaction) about what I already have.

It can also be understood that in the realm of evaluation working with ideas of moral development is fundamental to understanding values. They are not mutually exclusive but mutually attractive and supporting. One is a subsume of the other.

In teaching morality I wish to emphasize again that I am talking about working with students in order to get them to examine their own moral judgment. I am not talking about telling young people what morals are and what they "should do." I am talking about the examination process. I am going to dramatize this and illustrate how it might work by using the subject of death.

It seems to me that in and out of school most adults avoid this subject whenever possible. When it must be dealt with it is put into the realm of objectivity or "out there" and is laden with formal trappings to hide our feelings. In teaching we also avoid it by only dealing with it in terms of abstractions. We can work with students not only in and on the subject of death, but on their personal growth and also on an examination of their own morality!

Fear of death is present in all our young people. Gregory Rochlin, Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry of Harvard Medical School, states:

> "The child regards death as not due to natural causes but as a result of strife, defiance of authority and retaliation, hostility and the wish to satisfy aggressive, destructive and sexual impulses. In sum, death is the outcome of certain relations between people. Morality is introduced very early by the child in the belief that the bad die before the good. The good are rewarded by a return from the dead. The bad remain dead."[24]

It is from this, Rochlin believes, that the child moves into the civilizing process.

It is from this situation that in society and in our lives we do not examine ourselves to discover our feelings about death and to observe our own morality. To repress the fact of death and not to recognize it as the natural process it is, is to build defenses for something against which there is no defense. We simply add more inhibitions to an already overloaded situation. In examining death and in teaching about it we can not only work with the subject itself but we can examine our morality and our projected life.

In teaching literature one always comes across both the subject of death and the dynamics of dying. Generally, we treat the subject as something to be analyzed. Whenever I come across the subject I like to find some way in which we can not only discuss the subject openly but we can take a look at our own lives. Usually I initiate the discussion on the death in question and/or death in general. Sometimes the discussion will be initiated by one of the students. If appropriate, I will ask the group to write their own obituaries.

These are written in the style of a newspaper article. They can be entirely fictional or as much truth as the author desires. The following guidelines are given:

1. Name, age, place where died, and cause of death.
2. Parents, place of birth, year of birth, brothers and sisters surviving.
3. Those you leave behind: wife, children, husband, relatives, et al.
4. What work you specialized in during your life.
5. What were your greatest accomplishments.
6. What is your legacy to the world.
7. What you hoped to accomplish, but didn't.
8. If you had not been born, would it make any difference to the world? Why? Why not?
9. Where was your funeral held? Who was there? What was it like? Who was not there?

10. Write the words that you want to appear on your tombstone.
11. Write anything else you feel that the world should know.

Then I ask for volunteers to share their obituaries with the group. I also write one and quite often I take the lead by reading my obituary to the group first.

What comes out in the discussions is not only how we feel about the subject of death, but how we feel about our lives now, and the general feeling about oursleves and morality. One could go further and look at it also as a dynamic thinking and writing exercise (which it is).

Evaluation means looking to one's morality in order to examine it. Not knowing what we are is detrimental to ourselves and our learning.

Ethics (see Diagram 3)

I interpret ethics to be more the philosophical concept of morals and this, too, has its part in the concept of evaluation in confluent education. The question here of teaching is how you present the philosophy of ethics, or ethical philosophy. What is good? What is bad? It means to me that in teaching we do not make any such judgment. Things are. They may be functional or dysfunctional (in a particular situation) but there is no need to label them good or bad.

Ethics, in the form that I am using here, refers to a system of ethics. Systematic ethics, I feel, are a need of all humans. It is a part of the human condition that we do not exist separately, we exist as part of the whole. Without other humans a person does not exist. Knowledge of the self, of one human, is conditioned upon the other's existence.[25]

I feel that evaluation, seeking opinions from students, is to assist the student in forming an ethical system. This system need not be one that someone else has prepared to which the student must adhere, but rather one that has been formulated out of the student's own experiences and is thus congruent to living. However, it does mean that probably each one will have a similar basic system of ethics to which personal systems can be applied.

I can see development (by bringing them to the student's awareness) of individual systematic codes for whatever professions they enter. The point is that in confluent education we would work to bring out what the students already have and to encourage them to develop their own sets of codes of ethics.

Many of our ethical standards of today are probably seen by the young as barriers and limitations set by adults. They are blind to the fact that they already have a semblance of a code and that quite a few of these have a positive function. It is by examining these factors that students may also come to realize what both society and adults have to offer and what they mean by offering, and that changes in the codes can be made without the necessity of blind revolution.

Ethical systems are models. They can be, as Nevitt Sanford has said, models for others.

> "The ethical systems of other professions, such as business or the military, have become models for whole societies. Why should not the practice of science become such a model? After we have shown, as we can, that joy and beauty have their places in this system? At any rate, anyone who takes it upon himself to be a scientist, and succeeds in living up to its requirements, may be willing for his behavior to become a universal norm."[26]

The development of models based upon the models of what is already a part of the self could lead to personal satisfaction. It is leading on to the fact that persons believe they are important. In one study (Singh, 1972) it was reported that the important thing appeared to be "not that human beings get food, water and shelter, but that they get these things in ways that convey to the individual the sense that he is important"[27] This feeling can be brought forth by developing systemic codes of ethics for the self.

G. Gilbert Wrenn in his presidential address before the Division of Counseling and Guidance of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, Illinois, September 30, 1951, stated a personal creed for counselors that he had devised for himself. I think this statement is explicit in its relation to teaching and education. As you read it imagine that you are a student working out this statement for yourself. Also imagine what kind of student and person you might be if you adopted this credo:

> "I will respect the integrity of each individual with whom I deal. I will accord to him the same right to self-determination that I want for myself. I will respect as something sacred the personality rights of each person and will not attempt to manipulate him or meddle in his life. I will define my personal and ethical responsibility to my client as well as my legal and vocational responsibility to my organization and to society. I work for both the group to which I am responsible and for each individual that I serve as a client. This dual responsibility must be defined and understood by my employers and by myself."[28]

Contrary to popular belief ethical standards and ethical systems are not dead. Adults, in general, have simply not paid attention to them. How can we expect young people to pay that attention?

Effectiveness (see Diagram 3)

The final part of the evaluation element of confluent education is the idea of effectiveness. What is your idea of the effectiveness of anything? Suppose you made it a habit in your life to constantly ask and test yourself as to the effectiveness of what you are doing. What kind of a person might you be? In my belief, if we could learn to do this our lives might become more meaningful. We would begin to see and understand how things work for us. Then we can make appropriate decisions for ourselves on what is happening.

Asking students their opinion concerning the effectiveness of teaching method, effectiveness of what it is they are learning, effectiveness of the teacher, effectiveness of their own responses, effectiveness of their own habits, can lead to a continuing and vital look at the process. This look, in turn, can lead to valuable information as to what is happening, how it is

happening, and what its value is. Effectiveness usually means achieving goals. (Searching for your own definition of effectiveness may be a "technique" of clarifying values, not a separate entity.)

Connectedness[29] (see Diagram 3)

There is a fine old song that describes the bones of the body and tells how when they are all joined the human is going to once again see and hear and dance in joy.

The toe bone connected to the foot bone
The foot bone connected to the ankle bone
The ankle bone connected to the leg bone
The leg bone connected to the knee bone
The knee bone connected to the thigh bone

And so on until the body is complete and one can now "Hear the word of the Lord!" This is the purpose and the goal of the element of confluent education called connectedness. That is, to bring us together so that we may hear and enjoy one another.

In essence, connectedness is developing within the person a sense of positive affiliation with others; to enjoy one another, to establish a connection with others so that we understand our role in our society, where we fit into the scheme of things, and that there is a strong feeling of belonging to others and to the society.

The sense of positive affiliation with others is not gained by a spirit of extreme competitiveness in the classroom nor by emphasizing the differences between individuals. One looks for similarities between ourselves and enjoys the learning but there is no sense of trying to be "top dog" within the learning situation. In effect, an individual becomes aware of what he is doing and tries to assist the group in obtaining more knowledge. This attempt leads to more learning on the part of others. It is, in effect, the teaching of others by the students. It is also working toward reinforcing functional responses and extinguishing the ones that are ineffective and/or detrimental to the individual and the group.

In general it seems that most of us believe that rewarded behavior will counterbalance and extinguish unrewarded behavior. Yet, it is also true that many persons continue unrewarded behavior even when they apparently know that it will not work for them. Farber, in studying the effects of anxiety, found that a series of rats subjected to a shock will continue an unrewarding behavior indefinitely. They are much like neurotic persons. In continuing the experiment, however, Farber found a stronger reward than food was the reduction of the sense of anxiety in the rat.[30]

The latter finding is part of the idea of connectedness, or a sense of positive affiliation with others. Working in the classroom with this idea in mind and incorporating it into each lesson and each exchange and each response could lead toward reducing the sense of anxiety in each other.

If you have individuals within a classroom who are practicing unrewarding

behavior you can work toward reducing their anxiety by teaching in such a way as to help them drop unrewarding behavior for rewarding behavior, thus reducing anxiety and thereby increasing a person's ability to learn.

I make it a practice in every teaching situation to assure that each person has a partner to work with throughout the course. These partners are generally chosen by me with the idea of working not only on the subject matter, but learning to express one's self and to develop a sense of positive affiliation with at least one other person.

In general, I pick the person with whom they will work. This is done because, usually, students will choose to work with someone they know well or someone they have known before. I do the selection randomly, insofar as I can within the restrictions I begin with. I generally do not know the students. The first day I spend time looking them over and observing their behavior while we go through the administrative details of getting a class together. As we work together for the next few days I continue to observe their behavior. It is their behavior I am interested in. That is, I want to know what they are like.

After I have a working knowledge of the persons then I draw up the list of partners. First I pair them on a male-female basis. This relationship is so basic and is the cause of so much frustration in our lives (and especially those of secondary school students) that the development of a relationship of understanding, trust, and learning between sexes promotes individual growth as well as academic learning. I then change the partners so that the races are mixed. Learning to know others in a positive situation tends to bring out our similarities, not our differences. Then I look toward pairing individuals who are relatively non-verbal and pairing those who are aggressive and outspoken. In the former a condition develops where one person has to speak out, and in the latter the situation develops where one individual has to learn to listen. I keep all these ideas, and more, in mind as I begin to work out the partners.

For the initial meeting with their partners I explain to the students the idea of partners and that this person will be someone to work with, to share with and to learn with during the remainder of the course.

At this point I feel it appropriate for the partners to get acquainted and to get to know me better. So I ask the partners to get together and share with one another. After they have had a period of time to get acquainted, I then ask them to consider some cognitive concept that I have placed on the chalkboard and that is part of our lesson. When they seem to have relaxed and into the idea of working together and learning together (this may take several days) then I ask the partners to decide who is A and who is B. I sit down in front of the group and ask them to do the following:

A is to make statements about me to B. B has only two responses that can be made. A statement may be made, "I can verify that" or a statement can be made, "I cannot verify that." No other kinds of responses may be made. After a sufficient length of time the roles are reversed. At the end the partners discuss what happened with one another and then, as a total group, we discuss what happened. The general response to this is that the partners

learn to work together, to sharpen their observation skills, and they learn to talk easily about their teacher. They develop a positive sense of affiliation about me and with me. I become something more than just a thing. I always make a point with them also that we can only be sure of something if we do, in fact, verify it. If we cannot verify a thing in some way then it is merely imagination or supposition. If you think something about a person it is only supposition until you can check it out with that individual. Imagine what that concept does to students when they come to the realization that saying, "Joan hates me," or "I don't believe that's right" is only hearsay, nonadmissable and probably fiction until they can in some way verify it.

At this point I ask the students to return again to their partner and to remember who was A and who was B. Now, the instructions go, A is to make statements about B. B can still only respond with the statements, "I can verify that," or "I cannot verify that." This is harder to do than making statements about the teacher but in general they quickly learn to look at the other person and to speak. After a sufficient length of time I ask the students to reverse roles. Then after another length of time the partners are asked to discuss what happened, and we evaluate the whole procedure as a group.[31] The general evaluation of the procedure brings out the fact that now they notice things about the other person they had not noticed before, what they imagine about another person is most often not true, and it is hard to describe another person to that person (in effect, "I find it difficult to look at another person and say something about him.") It is also generally agreed that they now have a better understanding of the other person and of the class. It is unspoken, generally, but one can also feel a sense of affiliation with others in the group. "I belong here" becomes a fact and produces interest and motivation.

There is one more step in this process and that is the development of contracts between individuals. I now ask the partners to make a contract with one another for the course. They are to do this first verbally and later in writing. The contract is much like a business contract in that you exchange something for something. First one partner tells the other, "What I want from you." This is given in a five-minute period. Then the other partner replies by saying, "This is what I am willing to give." This is generally a three-minute period. They then establish a dialogue until that half of the contract is finished. Now they reverse roles and the second partner states, "What I want from you" and the first partner replies, "This is what I am willing to give." Then the dialogue is created. The finish of the process is that the partners discuss what happened and, as a total group, we discuss what happened.[32]

These processes have been carried on for several days and have been carried along in conjunction with the regular lessons. By the time the contracts are completed (usually five to seven days) we have begun to mesh as a unit and to work with one another. We have developed connectedness, that sense of positive affiliation. We are now ready to dig deeper into our work and to help one another.

Connectedness means developing a sense of positive affiliation with others. It does not involve threat or telling; it involves each individual working out his own situation. Some seem relatively superficial and some

seem deep and satisfying. However, to date, I have found none that have not produced human and intellectual growth in the individuals.

Identity (see Diagram 3)

Rabbi Hillel has said that "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If not now, when?" The concept of identity as an element of confluent education works on that principle. There must be included in our teaching and learning, each moment, from each subject, the need for developing a sense of self-worth. How we see ourselves, our self-image; how we perceive ourselves, our self-concept; what we know of ourselves, our self-awareness; how we like ourselves, our self-esteem; how we stand up to things, our ego-strength; when we know we are whole, our identity; these constitute the spoken or unspoken questions we all answer constantly.

We humans gain this identity primarily in relationship with other people. We must "check out" with others in order to know what we are. Part of this checking out system involves learning (and accepting) the difference between one's self and others. Finally, identity is gained from awareness of the relationship (and acceptance) to the position and function that one holds in the social organization. The identity needs are a normal part of one's learning in life and can be partially attained from the environment. Not meeting identity needs results in physical and psychological damage to the organism.

Emotional deprivation has been shown and observed over the years to cause changes in children. Deprivation at early ages has been shown to cause early deaths (another indication of the need for connectedness and identity). Children taken to the hospital or turned over to foundling homes have also been shown to have increases of marked sadness and anxiety and to be physically inhibited in growth. A study conducted by Lytt I. Gardner indicated that the withdrawing of a relationship can result in dwarfism in children and weaken them to the point that other factors take control and the child is available to numerous illnesses. In conclusion to this review of the findings he states:

> "In Bowlby's view the primary function of the mother is to integrate these responses into 'attachment behavior,' a more mature and more complicated pattern. In addition, there evidently are 'sensitive' periods in the course of human development, such as those familiar from animal experimentation. Exactly when these periods occur in human infancy, however, and just what conditions and experiences are necessary if the child is to develop normally remains uncertain. One conclusion nevertheless seems clear. Deprivation dwarfism is a concrete example--an 'experiment of nature,' so to speak--that demonstrates the delicacy, complexity and crucial importance of infant-parent interaction."[33]

The element of identity in confluent education seeks not only to help the person identify but to work with others in establishing their own identity. It is always a positive reinforcement. There is no attempt to give pseudo support or "blarney" but rather to build in a conscious effort to bolster each other's self-esteem. Sometimes these are deliberate strategies and sometimes they are "of the moment."

For some years I have been working with the Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, Education Department, in Los Angeles, as an instructor/consultant in a confluent education project. Part of this work has involved observing and participating in the temple schools. On one occasion I was observing a first grade class with their teacher, Kay Goodman. At one point Kay had her pupils (on those marvelously small chairs) arranged around her. She was telling the children the story of Joseph and his Brethren The children were delightfully imagining along with her. When she told about Joseph being in the dark pit they all closed their eyes, imagined it, and cried aloud in their grief. Kay was telling them about how important Joseph felt and how envious his brothers were of the position he had risen to in the Pharahh's service. At this point one little fellow, more perplexed than hurt (it seemed), said, "I never feel important."

Kay picked up the cue. "What would make you feel important?"

"If people would listen to me."

"We'll listen. What do you want to tell us?"

"I don't know."

Kay worked with him for several minutes. She asked him to say the things he liked about himself. Then she asked each member of the class to say things they liked about him. Then they talked about when they feel important and what it means to feel important about one's self. They talked about how each of them made each other feel important and what they saw as important in each one. Afterward, Kay went back to the lesson of Jospeh and the children followed along beautifully. The event happened because a student was open and the teacher was able to flow with the lesson. It came out of the lesson and went back into the lesson. Kay was sufficiently identified with herself to recognize that assisting others to find and build their own identity is a worthwhile practice and a natural part of teaching. "Seize the moment" would be a good slogan for any teacher (or person in any profession or walk of life).

Jerome Bruner sees the quest for identity in society and man as paradoxes.

> "A society's grasp of its history and a man's sense of his identity, when fully achieved, are final acts. But a community washed by the currents of growth does not easily come to a sharing of its conception of origins or the meaning of events. And no man answers easily the questions: 'Who am I, where do I belong, and of what am I capable?'"[34]

The questions are always with us and particularly so with the adolescent (though all ages can benefit from asking the questions). The adolescent seeks to understand individual identity as well as group identity. In the group the adolescent seeks to be accepted as an individual within a group and as a representative of his or her sex. These all have implications for the learning situation. Where the questions are too painful and are not dealt with, the individual's focus of energy is diffused and not attuned to learning.

The concept of identity in confluent education, when applied to the teaching situation (which, remember, is any situation anywhere in life), can

be a normal part of the subject matter presentation as well as the normal interactions that occur within a class. When the moment presents itself, either coming out of a theme of the lesson or coming out of a class interaction, it seems appropriate to work toward building self-esteem. Ego development is not just something that happens. We all have a part in each other's ego development whether we recognize it or not. We can recognize it and make deliberate intentions to refrain from a possibly ego deflating experience and turn any situation into one more item in the person's development toward recognition of his own self-worth, his own identity.

Power (see Diagram 3)

I feel that I should have put an exclamation mark after the title of this element. Say that word to yourself. Power! Roll it around on your tongue and feel it. Now speak it softly so that your lips push out as you say it. Now say it aloud with conviction. POWER! If anyone doubts that words are composed of cognitive and affective elements then please note how that word is a strong word and its very utterance seems to lift a person up and make him feel stronger.

There is a problem, however, with the confluent use of this word. The term, in confluent education, does not mean that one seeks or has acquired the ability to dominate and dictatorially deal with the environment and its people. That kind of power can lead to enslavement of others and, by its use, the enslavement of the user. No "power mad" person seems to have ever achieved anything like a relaxation of the inner spirit, but rather possessed a continuing need for more power in the sense here interpreted. On the other hand, the definition and use of the term POWER in confluent education is one that is directed toward an individual's personal concerns and the apparent human need to be responsible for what is happening to him.

Thus, power in confluent education is defined, simply, as a sense of control over what is happening and will happen. The individual feels, in this case, that he is not being manipulated and directed by outside forces but rather that he has a choice as to what he does or does not do, and, in turn, he is responsible for the choice he has made. If a person does not have this sense of control or influence, then it is easy to become dependent upon others. As I have indicated before, such dependency is a deterrent to learning (and certainly is anathema to the concept of living in a democratic society where individual responsibility is supposed to take precedence over state direction). I feel that much of the behavior we term "hangups" or mental disturbances is the result of a feeling of a loss of control or influence over what is happening and will happen. Thus we retreat into a situation in which we gain control or influence over what is happening and will happen. The deviating person is always in control in the same way that the consistent conformer is in control.

Changing people is a difficult process. Somehow individuals need to be trained to exert their will and to change. In a comparative study of principles and techniques of planned change, Lippitt, Watson, and Westley report that following the ideas of individual will, the will to change, and within the person the drive to somehow gain more control over one's fate, one group found these to be determinants of each person. These were present in each

individual (though sublimated to a great extent) and that in order to become more of what they wanted to be the role of the helping professions is to be a catalyst as the person goes through the pain of working through, acquiring, and developing responsibility (the finding and use of his power.)[35]

The withdrawn state is one in which individuals (and I speak especially of students in this case) have the least amount of a sense of their own control and influence. Though it is often a manipulative device (they have gained "control" of the situation), at the same time it is a painful situation. The retreat is a haven but it isn't comfortable.

When I am working with students in the classroom I become aware of those students who seem to be withdrawn. Once I notice all the little behaviors (which range from being nonverbal to continual sleepiness to ceaseless drawing) I proceed to help them in various ways to come out of the shell, to begin to get in touch with their power. In preceding pages I have talked about various teaching situations and the events that happened. All these have a bearing on developing the sense of power in students. During one school year I taught twelve young ladies in a tenth grade World History class who were withdrawn and whose behavior ranged from almost no classwork to several who dutifully delivered everything the book required and wrote down everything I said. In none of the twelve was their academic achievement high. I began working with the students to help them learn to speak out and to challenge verbally, as well as to be ready to see a different concept or idea in any historical situation. This was a beginning for me in that I began to come out myself and to actively seek to teach power to the students at the same time I was teaching my courses.

The idea of gaining power as an individual, as a student, does not imply the lack of control by the teacher . (Gaining such control is frightening to students.) It is, rather, as Weinstein and Fantini have stated, to bring about the ability "to plan and develop strategies," as well as to gain "knowledge of a variety of sources to tap, to be able to reorganize, and to manipulate concepts and ideas." Along with this we want the student to be able to be realistic about "what is achievable alone or in a group."[36] None of us, I imagine, want to kill off any dreams that anyone may have anymore than we want to kill off our own. But a realistic appraisal of one's own abilities and the abilities of a group is not killing the dream but making what can be done more enjoyable and acceptable. It is also accomplishing each moment what can be accomplished, with each step building upon another. Simpkins, in reviewing the opportunity of environment, has said:

> "A balanced sense of power, that is, the feeling that one has at least some ability to influence or control the environment, seems to be a necessity for mental health."[37]

She goes on to cite the work of Bettelheim with autistic children at the Orthogenic School of the University of Chicago as evidence because these autistic children withdraw from a world in which they feel that whatever they do it wouldn't make a difference.

There is a necessity to gain some measure of what it means to influence or control your environment in order to healthily assess your potentiality and gains.

Context (see Diagram 3)

It is a commonplace in our society that whenever anyone is asked about something he has done or said the reply is generally, "Well, that was taken out of context." Each time I hear the statement I find myself in complete agreement with the person making it. Unless I am aware of the person and his patterns of individual behavior and the environment in which that person operates and lives, I cannot truly understand what is being said and the behavior involved. In order to somewhat understand what is being communicated I must put it into the totality of the person, the environment and the moment.

The element of confluent education called context takes into account the necessity of evaluating anything in terms of what is going on at the moment and how it is going on. There are two questions that need to be asked whenever a behavior occurs. These questions are (1) what is the meaning of the behavior? and (2) how does it relate to the environment? Thus, it becomes a universality of which the person is an integral part. Where are you in the universe is the first view, and the second one is to understand that what you do, say, think, feel, etc., are filtered through the maze of concepts that are you and which have come from the countless experiences of your life. Then, to understand yourself, you need to understand your part in that scheme.

Context is composed of two concepts. The first is a term in linguistics called general semantics. The second is the word and concept, environment. These elements, coming out of the basic needs of an individual, will help him to learn what he is and how he is.

General Semantics (see Diagram 3)

Language, meaning, and behavior make up the concept of general semantics. The original theory was developed by Alfred Korzybski in 1921 with the study of how language shapes thought as well as expresses it.[38] Semantics looks at the human in terms of language, meaning, and behavior to see if he bears a close resemblance to reality. The further away from the resemblance the more we classify language, meaning, and behavior as "unsane." It is the knowledge that language, meaning, and behavior do not bear a resemblance to reality that individuals are classified as being mentally ill (though I feel uncomfortable when I realize that what is "unsane" in one society, or at one time in the history of a society, may not be "unsane" in another society or at another time).

In order to know anything, in order to gain information about the world, we must experience (it is by experience that we come to know). It matters not whether this is through deductive or inductive processes, it is the experience by which we come to know. We cannot be outside experience and understand it for we are always within the experience and must interpret from that viewpoint. Such experience is also modified by the use of language, for language itself seems to shape thought. Whatever language one possesses is the one through which you perceive, through which you have your power of developing concepts. It is, as Kaplan has noted, that we cannot know without depending somewhere on experience. He further states that what experience provides, in knowing, is an independence.

"That is, no objective which insists on its own rights regardless of our wishes, and only experience can transmit its claims to us. Experience is ultimate because it confronts us with a continuous ultimatum."[39]

The experience, then, becomes dependent on the experience of learning of language, the development of concepts, and the point of time of life at which the current experience is perceived. It is the language that provides for the discovery of things that were already there and the interpretation of these discoveries. In order to know we must understand these principles, look at them, and apply them. In confluent education, a teacher constantly checks to determine that what the student is saying and how it is being said are in harmony. The teacher follows a basic dictum of Socrates in that basic pursuit always follows the idea of definition of terms in order to become aware of what is happening.

Language not only shapes thought but in the process of social growth and development children show various levels of response through their acquisition and use of knowledge. Usable vocabulary shows gains from approximately one word at ten months to over twenty-five hundred words at six years. As this growth of vocabulary occurs, children also begin to use an increasing number of words in the sentences they construct. The construct itself comes out of the totality of their experiences in language (see following remarks as well as the reference to be cited by Gertrude Wyatt). As children seek to communicate more and more they tend to express themselves in longer and longer sentences.[40] Each new sentence and idea is shaped by how they have developed concepts and language, and is in turn shaped anew by what they are able to express in new language. If they are unable to experience new words and to conceptualize them, then the result is impairment in learning ability and development of roadblocks to learning and problems of mental conditioning.

As I write this now I am aware of how my lack of language, and the way I use what I have, is inhibiting my expression of what I wish to communicate to you. I am also aware that in the struggle to bring forth what I wish to say, in the way I wish to say it, I am promoting my own growth in communications and understanding. But it is in earlier childhood that our language problems are set and developed.

A series of research studies carried out in 1961 to 1964 concerned themselves with treatment of stuttering children, evaluating the results of treatment, carrying out pilot studies in diagnosis and treatment of children who had severe defective articulation and language disorders, and comparing children in the research groups with a number of significant variables. Wyatt has reported on the results of these studies. One such result, in particular, bears special significance regarding the need of an individual to have extensive verbal communication with other humans and that such communication needs to be harmonious in language, meaning, and behavior. Wyatt reports this result as follows:

> "Results 3 and 4 support our assumption that severely defective articulation occurs in children who have had insufficient auditory stimulation and verbal feedback in the home. It also supports our assumption that such verbal stimulation and feedback has to be provided by an interested adult rather than by other children in the family."[41]

It can be said, then, that lack of language response from adults inhibits the psychological and physiological growth of the human being because the child does not extend the words of his vocabulary nor lengthen his sentences (see Note 33 regarding deprivation dwarfism). These lacks can, obviously, (nay, do!) result in impaired educational experiences. If our language is inhibited, our learning is inhibited. That is one reason, as I see it, that general semantics is part and parcel of confluent education. As the use of language grows, and its understanding, then further development of learning ability and retention should result. Semantics, as has been noted, is an educational discipline. That was one of the major premises that Korzybski developed. It is in studying the language and developing language in children that congruence, that close correspondence to reality, comes about.

Understanding comes about through semantics in determining that language, behavior, and meaning are in congruence. How this works out in confluent education teaching may be seen from the following example.

I have often worked with secondary school students whose interests in learning have been impaired. Their interests, according to them, are not in the classroom, but outside where real learning comes about. Usually, their responses are excuses and rationalizations. The use of general semantics, turning to look at their language, behavior, and meaning in dealing with those problems (rather than punishment or neglect), serves to help them learn how their language affects what they do and how they do it. I have found that experiencing such knowledge begins to pay off in interest in themselves and learning how language works for and against them.

One such student was a young man who had been classified as a "slow learner." Over the years, the use of the term and the classes he was in had reinforced his behavior as a "slow learner." A check of his records indicated to me that there were no apparent physiological reasons for his classification but rather that his home experience, and, just as significantly, his school experience, had reinforced to him that he was a slow learner.

I worked with him whenever possible, not upon drilling more cognitive material into him, but rather upon his personal responsibility for his learning and his use of language. We had one significant exchange one day that led to a breakthrough in his reading problem. The class and I (it was a group of slow learners) were engaged in a discussion of reading--what it was, what it meant, what its value was, how we could teach each other to read. Tom, big, burly, beefy, an "Irish face" and red shock of hair, broke in to rumble, "I can't read."

I replied, "Will you repeat that statement, Tom?"

"I can't read."

"Say it louder."

"I can't read."

"Now yell it at me."

"I can't read! You know that! That's why I'm here!"

"I'm going to ask you to make another statement, Tom. Repeat it back to me. I won't read."

"I won't read."

"Repeat it again."

"I won't read, dammit!"

"O.K. Now shout that statement at me."

"I won't read!"

"Which one of those statements is more correct, Tom? I can't read or I won't read?"

"Well, I won't read. Cause I can read."

"That's right. You know it and I know it. The question to me is, what keeps you from reading?"

"I don't read well."

"That's right on, it seems to me. Now, what are you going to do about that?"

From this beginning we really began attacking the problem of his learning. The students and I, also, began to pay a lot more attention to how we were using language in the classroom. It became more of a habit for us to ponder the verbal exchange in terms of its language, the behavior exhibited, and the apparent meaning of what was said. I made no formal study of it but I do know that the vocabulary attainment of each student was significantly increased.

This was also a case of seeing things in a new light. For what we see is affected by the language we use and it is often determined by the language itself. In reporting on early experiments in perception at Harvard University, and their consequences for learning as well as recommendations stemming from the experiments in education, Earle C. Kelley reported how our eyes see true but the brain interprets what is seen.[42] In other words, our perceptual development as noted in our language, behavior, and meaning, is used to determine what it is that we are seeing. Therefore, what we see and hear is more dependent upon our development at a particular moment in time rather than a truth that can be cast upon it. In order to teach and to learn we need to be aware that what we "see" is not what we see, but rather what we think we see. It is as if the eyes are saying, "I see this," and the brain is saying, "No, that's not what you saw. What you saw was this." Awareness of this factor could lead to improvement in understanding as well as improvement in learning.

Spiegel notes that:

"We are continuously being misguided in our efforts to develop

> improved observational techniques by failing to pay sufficient attention to the linguistic underpinning of the words and concepts we borrow so freely from our native language. We tend to rely too much on machine techniques and improved statistical methods to get us out of our observational difficulties. It seems to me that we would be well advised to pay more attention to the adequacy of our concepts, for machines and statistics can do only what man asks of them"[43]

The implications from Kelley and Spiegel for education are enormous. If part of our scheme of things is not paying attention to the semantic qualities, then we are missing by a mile our search for knowledge and truth. It is a paradox of science as well as the liberal arts that two apparently opposite things can be true. Confluent education in operational definition would have to be aware of the semantic factors in all elements of teaching. The general semantics element of confluent education would serve as a brake and a guide in all teaching using confluent methodology, in that it would help ascertain when what was being taught as well as the methodology were in fact functional.

Training people to use language, with special emphasis on teacher and student, is the dynamic of general semantics in confluent education. This training involves helping people to not only be aware of how they use language, but in using it to recognize that they are responsible for how they use it. Perls argued that:

> "...we look at the way a person manipulates his language, and we see that the more alienated he is from himself, the more he will use nouns instead of verbs, and most especially, the word it. It is a "thing" that is convenient to use to avoid being alive. When I'm alive, I talk, I am "voicing." When I'm dead, then I "have a voice with words; this language will have an expression; etc. You notice that this description is mostly a string of nouns, and that all that remains of life is to put them together."[44]

Meaning is the main concern of semantics but meaning is not in words, but in people. Words are not really what they refer to, for besides affective meaning, words can stay the same but the value changes. Language in its use attempts to affect behavior, and that in itself is one of the primary reasons why general semantics (whose purpose is to analyze the function and use of language) is an element of confluent education. Two statements from a science fiction story that I once read fit precisely here. The two statements are: "The map is not the territory," and "The name is not the thing." (A. E. Von Vogt, The World of Null-A).[45]

Environment (see Diagram 3)

As was noted in the initial definition of context, there is always the person who is claiming (always legitimately, I think) that "I was quoted out of context." The implicit thought in the statement is that what was said, or done, must be taken into account according to the environment in which it occurred. One can say that the figure must be related to the background in which it dwells in order to fully know and to integrate what is happening.

When something is evaluated through its environment it is integration rather than separation.

When, in teaching, an individual pays attention only to the cognitive elements, then it is separation and the subject matter is not in its environment. A whole segment of meaning has been left out and what is transmitted is a "thing." Understanding will come about because the individual will ascribe an affective element to that "thing" which, in itself, may be totally out of context.

In a study of the Pragmatics of Human Communication, Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson note that:

> "The paramount communicational significance of context is all too easily overlooked in the analysis of human communication, and yet anyone who brushed his teeth in a busy street rather than in his bathroom might be quickly carted off to a police station or to a lunatic asylum--to give just one example of the pragmatic effects of nonverbal communication.[46]

A thing that is done must be evaluated in terms of the environment in which it is done. It seems to me that our courts do this when they consider the circumstances of a criminal action in determining what kind of prosecution to make, should probation be offered, and if the person is found guilty, what shall the sentence be? The same can be said for teaching. What we teach, how it is taught, and what are the results must be taken into account through the context in which they occur.

Confluent teaching to be confluent teaching must be in context. This context comes about in two ways. In the first part, what is being taught and how it is being taught must be in harmony, and in the second, what is being taught must carry a cognitive and an affective element, I have taught a series of classes in which I try to work out the cognitive elements and the affective elements so that subject matter and affective are integrated and yet each has a separate role.

One of these classes was an introduction to Greek Philosophy for a secondary school class. In this class I brought to the students a series of Greek philosophers and their basic philosophies. As these were taught we had a series of daily dyad experiences in which how to philosophize as well as learning to work with another person were inherent.

During one week we were working with Thales' development of the method of thinking called "observed experience." After a discussion of the topic I asked the students to form dyads and to decide which was A and which was B. A was to make a series of observations (statements only) about B. Each sentence was to begin with, "I see....." B was to just listen and make eye contact with A. Then B was to make statements (statements only) to determine what it was that A actually observed. A could then respond. But the form of the dialogue must be followed. Afterwards, they switched roles, repeated the process, and we followed this up with a class discussion and evaluation both of what had happened to them and the validity of Thales' method of thinking.

This experience was both cognitive and affective in many senses. However, basically, we worked in and out of Thales' idea that observed experience is the best method for learning and knowing. The way of observed experience and feedback, and stating what was observed, was practiced. In addition, talking to another person, interacting with another person, speaking one's mind on a subject, with all the attendant fears about one's inadequacies in speaking and thinking, et al., were present and worked with. It was a totally integrated experience that added to the learning situation by putting what Thales had observed into a proper environment and teaching all in a confluent way.

To be explained, an experience (a phenomenon) needs to include the environment in which the event occurs. It is in the environment that the clues to what is being said or done can be read.

Environment, as I see it, is not a restrictive thing in that everything exists in that environment. Nothing exists without its attendant environment. The concept of the figure-ground phenomenon is very appropriate in any situation. In order to understand the figure we must understand the ground, and that means the environment.

Waltzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson disagree while agreeing with this idea of environment. They write:

> "Context, then, can be more or less restricting, but always determines the contingencies to some extent. But context does not consist only of institutional, external (to the communicants) factors. The manifest messages exchanged become part of the particular interpersonal context and place their restrictions on subsequent interaction."[47]

I must keep in mind that my responses to the students one day may very well be predicated on that disagreement, which is a part of the environment in which I exist at the moment, and is affecting my teaching and responses to the students.

Gestalt (see Diagram 3)

According to what I have read and discussed with others the German word Gestalt cannot be adequately translated into English. It seems that an approximation can be made by using the word and concept "wholes." This means that when something is finished, made whole, brought together, closed (as in closing a circle), that is a Gestalt. Any unfinished situation is an open Gestalt and a finished situation is a closed Gestalt. Every situation, then, is a Gestalt, and each one builds on to another so that Gestalt is like one atom merging into another, that whole building into another thing that is composed of atoms, and that building into the environment (an integral part), and so on ad infinitum to the end of the universe (if it has one). Anything that is finished is a whole. But it also means that it builds into the next unfinished situation which must be made into a whole. Gestalt is a process of continual building. In this definition, concept, and element, Gestalt is probably the fundamental element in Confluent Education.

Perls Frederick, Hefferline, Ralph F., and Goodman, Paul. Gestalt Therapy. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1951.

Perls, F. S., Ego, Hunger and Aggression. New York: Random House, 1960.

Perls, Frederick S., Gestalt Therapy Verbatim. Lafayette, California: Real People Press, 1969.

Perls, Frederick S. In and Out of the Garbage Pail. Lafayette, California: Real People Press, 1969.

Other pertinent works, which deal in concept or in part with the fundamental theories and concepts of the above books, will be found in the notes at the ends of these chapters or in the list of books and periodicals at the end of this work. For the concept of Gestalt in confluent education there are two minor elements that seem uppermost of the many available. These elements are the concepts explication and frustration. We will begin with the concept frustration since it is a fundamental in arriving at the explication stage.

Frustration (see Diagram 3)

The term frustration is in itself an example of another highly affective word. It immediately brings to mind a sense of not being able to arrive at a goal, of being thwarted in trying to reach something that is highly desirable, and of a general tenseness throughout the organism. As far as I can determine no one likes the feeling of frustration because it brings with it a feeling of not being able to cope with the environment and a general feeling of helplessness. When these feelings are extreme, then we humans fall into states of mental disturbance that are often detrimental to one another or one's self.

Yet, there are many of us who believe that only by frustration can individuals or mankind make progress. It is being frustrated that we find new ways to accomplish our purpose or discover that the goal we sought was not worthwhile in the first place. "We need frustration," is often the statement used in order to get ourselves moving and to keep from stagnating.

It is a form of this latter definition and feeling of the concept frustration that I see as a necessary element of confluent education as it is personified in the theory and practice of Gestalt Therapy. It is deliberately utilizing friendly frustration in order to help the individual to get moving and to take responsibility for the self. This frustration is meant to not do for others what they are capable of doing for themselves. At the same time you help them to understand what they are doing, how they can change, and that they can change. It is not doing for people, it is doing with people.

Most of our human behavior seems to result from acquired habits which, in Gestalt theory, is referred to as "fixed Gestalts" (see Diagram 4). These are behaviors which we set into ourselves over the years and often are not even conscious that we have. Examples of this are mannerisms such as tugging at the ear, stroking the chin, or fooling with the hair. Other, perhaps less obvious habits, are the way we use words, hold our bodies, and our general reactions to people and to life. The point is that we get so set in our ways

it is difficult to change. The behavior may be detrimental to us but we simply hate to change and break our habit pattern, our fixed Gestalts. Breaking these habit patterns are necessary if an individual is to change. This is the purpose of Gestalt Therapy (or any therapy for that matter). It is also the purpose of education.

Stotland has reported that:

> "Brown and Farber (1951), Marx (1956), and Amsel (1958) have theorized essentially that if an organism's responses are frustrated or blocked for any reason, or if an organism is not rewarded for a response for which it had previously been rewarded, the organism's general drive would increase. It will perform any post-frustration behavior with greater vigor.[48]

It would seem that education may have been slowed by attempting to motivate through other means or to work with reluctant learners through continual cognitive bombardment, or to increase learning by overloading high achievers. What is being done in these instances is taking responsibility for the students and not frustrating them to the point where they begin taking responsibility for their own behaviors. If frustration will result in greater vigor in post-frustration periods, it would seem that frustration is a functional technique to be utilized in education.

The following anecdote is an example of what I mean by frustration. It is not as satisfactory an anecdote as I would like in that it only illustrates one phase of how frustration is used. In reading this, focus on what is happening to the student rather than to the grading (even though, in this instance the grading was one source of frustration used, a subtle one, and effective).

Steve, you have the body of a man, a handsome face, tumbled yellow hair, piercing eyes, tensed muscles, and you are fifteen years old. When I called the roll you only lifted your hand a few inches above the desk. You never spoke.

The first quarter you didn't say a word, you didn't read, you didn't write. You just sat. But you weren't idle. No, I can't say you were idle. You pushed your chair up against the wall and you watched us. You heard the lessons. You must have heard and felt the emotional reactions of people involved in life. You must have thought about what we were doing and saying and being.

Your first words came at the end of that first quarter. You received your grade card. Your voice was soft, pushed out, almost inaudible.

"Why did you give me a 'C' grade?"

"You figure it out, Steve."

And you, the Nautilus, went back into your shell, and did not emerge until the end of the second quarter, the end of the first semester. It was after you received your second grade card.

"Why did I get a 'C' grade? I didn't do anything."

"You want me to give you an 'F', Steve. I'm not going to play your game."

You remember the ball? Day after day that third quarter you sat and bounced your ball on the floor against the wall. You would bounce the ball and watch me out of the corners of your eyes. You grinned at times. It was a beautiful grin. There were days when I was close to exploding but I held on. I stuck it out. The other students yelled at you at times. You looked at them. Sometimes you smiled.

Remember the third quarter report card?

"You gave me a 'B' on my report card. That's stupid."

"What makes it stupid, Steve?"

"I haven't done a thing. Not one thing."

"You never saw a thing you did? You never saw a thing we did? You never heard a word that was said? You don't remember one thing that happened in this classroom? You don't remember what you thought about all those days we were together?"

You went back to your seat and sat there and looked at me. I didn't know what you were thinking.

It was the fourth quarter that you split your shell. Remember when the class was talking about grades and you said you got a "B"? The whole class was angry. Remember what you told them?

"You never saw a thing I did? You don't remember a thing I did? I listened to all of you. I thought about what you said. I know more than any of you!"

Thanks, Steve. I needed that.

The following year Steve was with me again and this time he began to read, write, and talk. Steve was still more silent than verbal, but he was letting the world know that he could learn, was learning, and knew what to do with it. In class he became a participant as well as an observer.

In confluent education terms frustration can be utilized to help students to stand on their own two feet. It is essential that this practice be included as much as possible or practical within the ongoing situation of the classroom. Standing on your own two feet means becoming responsible for yourself.

As has been noted, there are two ideas about frustration. Generally, frustration has been looked upon as an evil and detrimental to the human condition. When the human being is continuously and systematically frustrated it seems possible to mold him into behaviors that are not only detrimental to himself but to society as a whole. Berelson and Steiner in their inventory of scientific findings in human behavior state the hypothesis on this type of frustration in this way:

> "When an external barrier stands between a motivated subject and his goal, he normally tries to circumvent, remove, or otherwise master it. (The rat may learn to run the maze or push the bar; the man, to solve the problem.) But when the barrier is not mastered and/or the motivation increases in intensity, the resulting frustration of the goal-directed behavior produces a number of less adaptive results."[49]

One of these less adaptive results is that of autistic children. Bettelheim in his life work of studying and working with these children makes the point that there is manageable and nonmanageable frustration. It is in the manageable frustration that the child learns to adapt to life.

> "And the manageable frustration that follows is what makes him aware that an outer world even exists. The emphasis here is on the manageable. Because otherwise the child is so flooded by unpleasant emotions that nothing else seems to exist. Blotted out is the barely emerging awareness of a world that responds. Thus the child's expectation that something outside of him will satisfy his needs is what powerfully increases his interest in the world and his impulse to learn more about it."[50]

It is this manageable frustration that I am speaking of when I take the element of frustration as a necessary part of confluent education. The key is the teacher (or other person) being sensitive enough to know when the frustration is too much or too harsh for the other to handle. It follows something that I once heard Perls remark (which I can only paraphrase): "If I am cruel because I have a need to be cruel, that is cruelty. If I am cruel because I am helping you to find your own strengths, that is not cruelty." His apparent meaning in this statement was that in order to help other people we do not take away the opportunity to work out their own solutions and do their own thinking. Whenever we do for others what they can do for themselves, we are robbing them of self and, what is most important for us to recognize, we are doing more for ourselves than we are doing for the persons we ostensibly are trying to help. In the same theme Perls has remarked about the idea of frustration:

> "It is true that in a final sense, we cannot possibly be frustrated. Either our self-esteem or the organism will always find some way out. ...Whatever frustration we encounter, there is always some alternate attempt to get satisfaction. The only trouble is that if the key doesn't fit the lock, the door doesn't open--the substitute does not lead to the completion of the situation. But staying with frustration, staying with boredom, will evoke organismic self-regulation."[51]

In terms of confluent education, frustration is one of the elements that attempts to lead the person to organismic self-regulation. It is not an unimpassioned relationship that the teacher is involved in, but rather one that says, "I have confidence in your ability. I like you for what you are and for what you are trying to be. I am here if you need me. But first, you try."

Explication (see Diagram 3)

To make the implicit explicit is one of the fundamental concepts of Gestalt therapy inherent in the theory and practice of confluent education. It is to take that which is in the background and bring it to the fore, and that which we mean to be exactly what we mean it to be, rather than obfuscating the issue.

Gestalt psychology theorizes that each of us organizes our perceptions according to "figure" and "ground." "Figure" is that which is explicit, in the fore and the center of attention of the organism, while "ground is the context in which the figure is set. As you look around you, become aware of the fact that it is probably impossible for more than one thing to be the center of attention at any one time. Whenever your eyes focus on an object for a fraction of a second, that object comes into focus and is the figure, while everything else immediately recedes and becomes the background. It is in this factor that Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman see the dynamic of human living as well as the essentiality of making what is implicit in the background to be explicit in the foreground.

> "The interplay between figure and ground is dynamic, for the same ground may, with differing interests and shifts of attention, give rise to different figures; or a given figure, if it contains detail, may itself become ground in the event that some detail of its own emerges as figure."[52]

The purpose of Gestalt therapy follows this in seeking to make the implicit assumptions and behaviors of the patient explicit so that he becomes aware of what he is doing (bringing the behavior to the foreground and focusing the attention).

In confluent education, focusing on implicit behavior, the background of what the student is doing, and making it explicit so that the student can see what he is doing and how he is doing it can help him become aware of how he is learning and the value of what he is learning. This, in turn, can lead to awareness of the subject matter as a dynamic in itself rather than as a thing.

The Gestalt approach emphasizes that perceptions can be learned as movements are learned. The success in action leads to a closure of the situation (as the definition of Gestalt has indicated). In making the situation explicit, bringing what was in the background to the foreground, insight is the result, and with insight comes closure and the satisfaction of the organism. It seems that this indicates that intellectual understanding is the basis of all understanding. Insofar as I have been able to determine, the Gestalt-oriented person recognizes that some things occur (the figure and ground shift, closure is made), and the organism is apparently not aware of what has happened or that it has happened. Since the process of Gestalt is completing a Gestalt (making closure), then moving on to the next one, ad infinitum, then it seems obvious that awareness of every individual closure is not only an unreasonable assumption but an impossible one.

Roberto Assagioli, originator of the concept and practice of Psychosynthesis, states the situation in this manner:

> "...it is not necessary to know the mechanism of transmission--the fact is that sometimes the answer comes seemingly spontaneously through a third person or through a book or other reading matter, or through the development of circumstances themselves. In a certain sense this should not surprise us too much, and it might indicate the fact that enlightening impressions or psychological communications are reaching us all the time, even when not consciously sought. It is we who do not recognize the many and varied 'signals.'"53

What is explicit is that change has occurred and there is a change in behavior. The person has become aware of a behavior and has acted upon it to bring about change.

Summary

Confluent education is the merging of the cognitive and affective domains of man's knowledge. The teaching of cognitive material without attention to the affective element results in knowledge that is incomplete, as well as an individual who has lost an opportunity to grow intellectually and emotionally (the converse of this statement is also true).

Confluent means to merge two or more things together so that you cannot tell one from the other.

A "true" confluence will result in a congruence which is a state wherein what the person does, says, thinks and appears, and the environment in which it occurs, are all in harmony.

There are nine elements of confluent education which must be present in the immediate teaching situation in order for confluent education to exist. They must be included in all lessons and lesson planning in addition to, and merged with, the cognitive elements and framework. These nine elements of confluent education are:

1. Responsibility - ability to respond creatively and positively to any situation.

2. Convergency - relating and experiencing what is done or what is happening to the self.

3. Connectedness - a sense of positive affiliation with others.

4. Divergency - relating and experiencing what is happening in the world to the educational experience.

5. Power - a sense of control over what is happening or will happen to you.

6. Gestalt - gaining closure (satisfaction) through positive frustration and explication.

7. Identity - a feeling of self-worth, self-esteem, ego identity, a general sense of well being.

8. Context - learning to understand communications and to speak it through general semantics and environment.

9. Evaluation - eliciting individual's opinions as to values, morality, ethics, and effectiveness.

The flow of confluent education is both a direct and flanking action against the "fixed Gestalts" (habit patterns, character) of the learner (see Diagram 4). In diagram 4 we can observe that the goal is "The Integrated Man" and the obstacle to learning is the Learner with his "Fixed Gestalt" (habit pattern, character). Beginning with the basic needs of man as isolated and identified by Abraham Maslow, the concepts and elements mount a multi-pronged attack to alter the figure-ground formation. The figure-ground formation shifts to bring to the learner's awareness the cognitive goals, affective goals, and confluent goals available within the situation. Shifts in the figure-ground that are functional for the individual lead toward assimilation and integration, congruence, and The Integrated Man. Note that in the whole process it is the organism balancing itself intellectually and emotionally that provides the energy for change; the catalyst is confluent education.

The Integrated Man is one whose belief in himself is rational according to his context, whose contemporaries see him as rational, and a person who is free to choose and move in an effective response to a situation. The Integrated Man is one whose power lies within himself and he can draw on his universe for sustenance.

THE FLOW AND ATTACK OF CONFLUENT EDUCATION

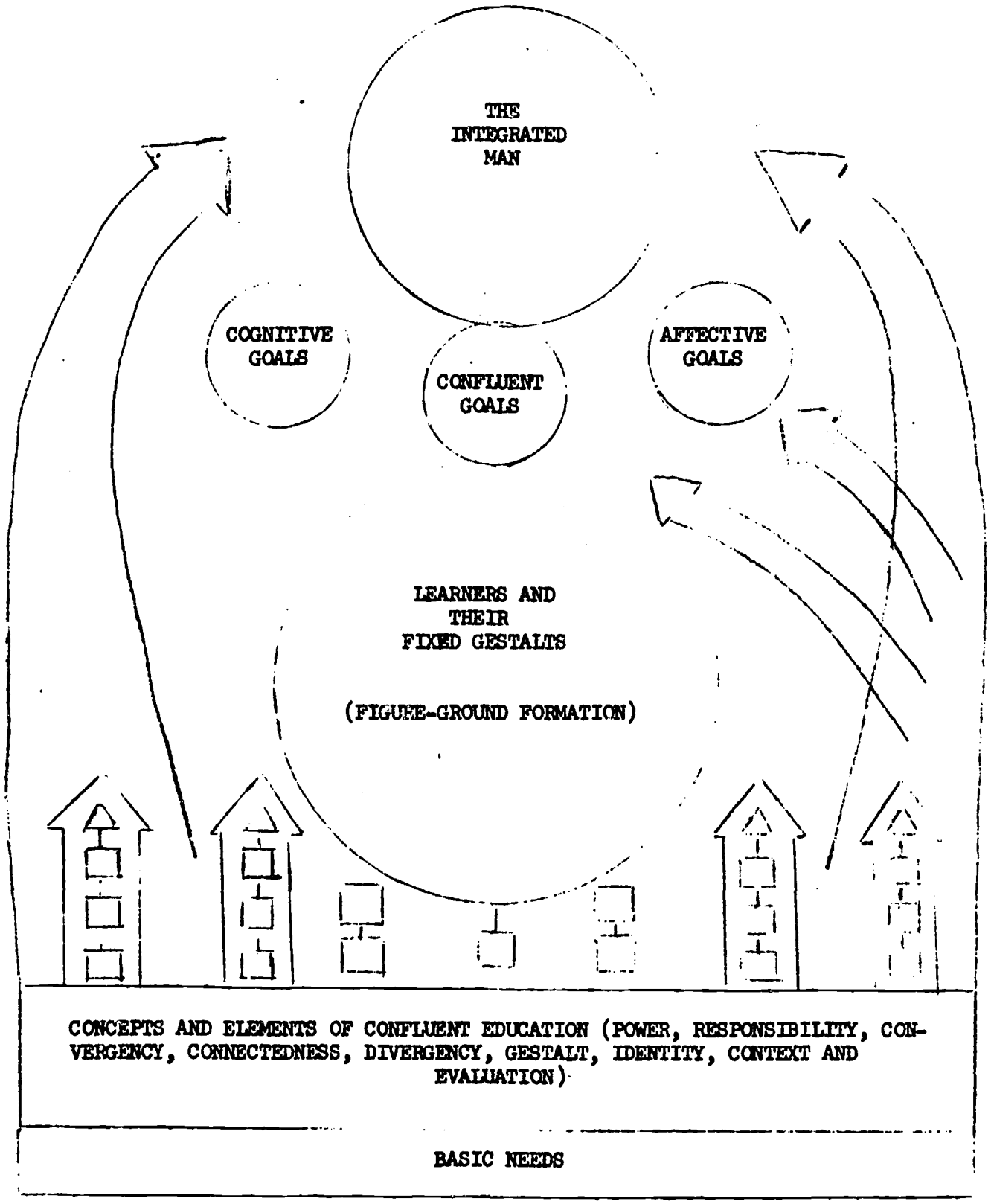

DIAGRAM 4

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Dr. George Isaac Brown, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara, California.

2. The results of this work are contained in the book by George Isaac Brown Human Teaching for Human Learning.

3. Dr. Frederick Perls, psychiatrist, developer of use of Gestalt psychology in psychotherapeutic work and education.

4. Please refer to the bibliography for a list of the publications for which Perls is best known. Perls built his theories and ideas upon the work of the field theorists with particular emphasis upon the work of Wertheimer in Germany, to whom Perls acknowledges his debt. In the sense that I believe that the work of Frederick Perls is bringing about a profound change, lies the thought that we have looked at people and life as if they were things and separated life into component parts. Perls presented a system in which things are once more integrated. That is, he looked at people as humans and as a total entity; mind and body are one and each part must be in harmony with the other. In turn, this person is in context of the moment; it is not yesterday and it is not tomorrow, it is now. When education (as well as humanity) looks to exist now rather than in some nebulous past or future, then to that extent will it be a healthy and growing entity. When Perls said that "you are not in this world to live up to my expectations and I am not in this world to live up to yours," he set a standard by which we can love and live with one another as humans rather than as objects or unemotional intellects.

5. This personality situation is akin to sociologist David Riesman's concept of the "inner-directed" person. (We have a construct here that is "sociological" in definition but has its counterpart in the psychology of the individual). Riesman says, "What is common to all the other-directed people is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual--either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media. This source is of course "internalized" in the sense that dependence on it for guidance in life is implanted early. The goals toward which the other-directed person strives shift with that guidance. It is only the process of striving itself and the process of paying close attention to the signals from others that remain unaltered throughout life." (See David Riesman with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character, 1961, p. 21. In the sense that Perls uses this concept, the individual has become so "inner-directed" that he cannot distinguish where his own personality ends and the other begins--even if he wants to distinguish between the two. The purpose of therapy, when it becomes advisable, is to bring to the foreground that there is such a state of confluency and that the individual must make a decision to remain in that state or to work toward a separation of the two. In other words, to remain being directed by another or to take responsibility for one's own decisions.

6. What is meant here is that there is already an established cognitive curriculum within the schools. The affective goals and objectives are established as a result of what is being taught, plus the new goals and objectives that come from confluent education. This is not a diminution of learning but an enhancement. This is not to imply that I do not challenge many of the existing goals and objectives. The presentation of the confluent education approach will illustrate the conflicts. Where these goals and objectives are in conflict with confluent education principles there is a need to reexamine and perhaps reshape them. Such is not within the scope of this work and will be left to a later time.

7. Ittelson, W. H. and Kilpatrick, F. P. "Experiments in Perception." In Stanley Coopersmith (Ed.) Frontiers of Psychological Research, 1966, p. 179.

8. A good way of approaching a concept is to interpret the meaning by its definition and by how it is used. Too many of our "understandings" are based on perceptions inappropriate to meaning and use.

9. Riesman, David with Glazer, Nathaniel and Denny, Reul. The Lonely Crowd. 1961, pp. 19-24.

10. Perls, Frederick, Hefferline, Ralph F. and Goodman, Paul. Gestalt Therapy. 1951, p. 216.

11. President Nixon in a recent interview with Garnett Horner of The Washington Star News (November 1972) spoke well on this point as he said, "The average American is just like the child in the family. You give him some responsibility and he is going to amount to something...If, on the other hand, you make him completely dependent, pamper him and cater to him too much, you make him soft, spoiled and a weak individual." Confluent education seeks to change this attitude and to work with the student so that he becomes responsible in his learning, in his life, and thus in and to society.

12. Brumer, Jerome S. Toward a Theory of Instruction. 1967, pp. 161-162.

13. Guilford, J. P. "Three Faces of Intellect." American Psychologist, 1959, Vol. 15, pp. 470-475.

14. Assimilation is seen as a separate state in confluent education.

15. As reported in Biehler, Robert L. Psychology Applied to Teaching. 1971, p. 800.

16. Reported in Brubaker, Dale L. "Normative Value Judgments and Analysis." Social Education, Box 32, May 1968, p. 491.

17. For insight and examples of his work see Gerald Weinstein and Mario D. Fantini (Eds.) Toward Humanistic Education: A Curriculum of Affect. 1970.

18. The term "process" as used in this work means an examination and evaluation of what has happened. The students and the teacher share what they have felt and heard and they discuss the meaning of what has happened. Processing is a necessary part of confluent education so that order and insight can come out of what has been experienced.

19. Laird, Charlton. The Miracle of Language. 1953, p. 60.

20. Gattegno, Caleb. The Adolescent and His Will. 1971, p. 123.

21. Otto, Herbert A. Guide to Developing Your Potential, 1967, pp. 153-154.

22. Getzels, Jacob W. and Jackson, Philip W. Creativity and Intelligence. 1962, pp. 34-36.

23. Kohlberg, Larry. "Moral Education in the School." School Review, 1966, Vol. 74, p. 7. The additional levels IV and V relate to the discussion of ethics and can be examined in the reference.

24. Rochlin, Gregory. Griefs and Discontents. 1965, p. 91.

25. This statement, as well as the general philosophy of confluent education, is derived from existentialism. See also the confluent education concept of "connectedness."

26. As reported in Bennis, Warren G. Changing Organizations. 1966, p. 35.

27. Singh, Devendra. "The Pied Piper vs. the Protestant Ethnic." Psychology Today, January 1972, Vol. 5, pp. 53-56.

28. Wrenn, G. Gilbert. "The Ethics of Counseling." in Gail F. Farwell and Herman J. Peters (Eds.) Guidance Reading for Counselors, 1960, p. 421.

29. The basic ideas for the concepts to follow, connectedness, identity, power, are found in Gerald Weinstein and Mario D. Fantini (Eds.) Toward Humanistic Education: A Curriculum of Affect. A Ford Foundation report, 1970, (See Note 17).

30. Farber, I. E. "Response Fixation Under Anxiety and Nonanxiety Conditions." Journal of Experimental Psychology, 1948, Vol. 38, pp. 111-131.

31. The "Verification Game" process was developed by Dr. George Isaac Brown. (See Notes 1 and 2).

32. The idea of making contracts between individuals and groups explicit and some processes relevant thereto were learned from Dr. Stewart B. Shapiro of the Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara, California.

33. Garder, Lytt I. "Deprivation Dwarfism." Scientific American, July 1972, Vol. 227, p. 82.

34. Bruner, Jerome. On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand. 1966, p. 43.

35. Tippit, Ronald, Watson, Jeanne, and Westley, Bruce. The Dynamics of Planned Change. 1958, p. 24.

36. See Note 2 and 9. Reference pages 39-40.

37. Simpson, Elizabeth Leonie. Democracy's Stepchildren. 1971, p. 172.

38. As noted in Postman, Neil and Weingartner, Charles. Linguistics: A Revolution in Teaching. 1966, p. 129.

39. Kaplan, Abraham. The Conduct of Inquiry. 1964, p. 35.

40. As reported, paraphrased and developed by Lindgren, Henry Clay. Educational Psychology in the Classroom. 1956, p. 56-59.

41. The whole series of studies are reported in Wyatt, Gertrude L. Language, Learning and Communication Disorders in Children. 1969, p. 249 for the excerpt quoted.

42. Kelley, Earle C. Education for What is Real. 1946.

43. Spiegel, John. Transactions: The Interplay Between Individual, Family, and Society. 1971, p. 113.

44. Perls, Frederick S. "Four Lectures." in Joen Fagan and Irma Lee Shepherd (Eds.) Gestalt Therapy Now, 1970, p. 20.

45. This argument is not meant to imply that general semantics and confluent education are the same. Confluent education makes a unique contribution in that it does not analyze the function and use of language but rather teaches and practices how to use the findings of semanticists and others in order to help the individual relate to themselves and their environment in a more functional way. The confluent education approach to semantics is to teach you how to analyze and interpret your own language, and to some extent that of others, and then to make choices and changes based upon that examination.

46. Watzlawick, Paul, Beavin, Janet Helmich, and Jackson, Don D. Pragmatics of Human Communication. 1967, p. 62.

47. Ibid. p. 132.

48. Stotland, Ezra. The Psychology of Hope. 1969, p. 130.

49. Berelson, Bernard, and Steiner, Gary A. Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings. 1964, p. 267.

50. Bettelheim, Bruno. The Empty Fortress. 1967, p. 24.

51. op cit, Fagan and Shepherd. Gestalt Therapy Now, p. 34.

52. op cit, Perls, Hefferline, Goodman. Gestalt Therapy. p. 24.

53. Assagioli, Roberto. Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques. 1965, p. 205.